



October 23, 2024

Subject:

Request for Municipal Support in Funding Shelter and Spay/Neuter Services for Animals Brought to the Humane Society in the Municipality of Belleville

Executive Summary

The Municipality of Belleville has a critical responsibility to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of both its human residents and the animals within its community. The humane society and animal control services are essential in fulfilling this role, addressing the immediate needs of abandoned and stray animals while protecting public health and safety. However, the current level of municipal funding falls significantly short of the total cost required to effectively provide shelter, care, and spay/neuter services for these animals.

We are kindly requesting that the City Council allocate additional funds to cover the shortfall and ensure the humane society can continue to operate effectively. The total annual deficit in funding is **\$304,443.18**, highlighting the urgent need for increased municipal support. Additionally, we propose that each year's contract be renewed based on the previous year's numbers, creating a framework that equitably addresses changes in animal populations. This approach ensures that should there be a decrease in animal numbers, both parties would benefit, fostering a collaborative partnership that adapts to the community's evolving needs.

Why Animal Control and Humane Society Services Are Critical

1. **Public Health and Safety:**

The humane society and animal control services play a vital role in safeguarding public health. Stray and abandoned animals pose risks, including the potential spread of diseases like rabies and parasites that can affect both animals and humans. Animal control ensures that these animals are removed from public spaces, minimizing the risk of transmission. Furthermore, dangerous or aggressive animals can be safely captured and rehomed or rehabilitated, preventing injuries to the public.

2. **Legal Obligations and Provincial Legislation:**

Municipalities in Ontario are legally required to provide animal control services. The **Ontario Animal Protection Act**, as well as the **Municipal Act**, stipulate that municipalities are responsible for enforcing laws related to animal welfare, including controlling stray and abandoned animals. Additionally, under the **Provincial Animal Welfare Act 2019**, municipalities are tasked with addressing cases of neglect and cruelty. Failure to provide these services would not only result in negative outcomes for animals but could also place the municipality at risk of non-compliance with provincial laws, leading to potential legal consequences.

3. **Preventing Overpopulation:**

One of the most effective ways to reduce the number of unwanted animals in the community is through spay/neuter programs. Uncontrolled breeding leads to an overpopulation of pets, which in turn causes overcrowded shelters, higher euthanasia rates, and increased financial strain on the municipality. By investing in spay/neuter services, the municipality can reduce the number of stray and abandoned animals, which will lower overall shelter intake and associated costs in the long term.

Consequences of Not Supporting These Services

1. **Increased Stray and Abandoned Animals:**

Without adequate shelter and spay/neuter funding, the number of stray and abandoned animals will increase significantly. This creates a public safety hazard and places additional strain on the resources of the humane society. The increased population of homeless animals leads to higher rates of suffering, including injury, malnutrition, and disease, which could spill over into the broader community.

2. **Health Risks to the Public:**

Stray animals that are left unchecked can cause accidents, damage property, and in some cases, pose risks to the safety of residents, especially vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. Stray animals may also spread diseases that can be harmful to both humans and other animals. These risks highlight the importance of having a strong animal control system in place.

3. **Financial Burden on the Municipality:**

While the current annual municipal contribution to animal services is **\$50,988**, the overall cost of providing shelter, spay/neuter, and vaccinations for animals brought to the humane society far exceeds this amount. The shortfall, which totals **\$304,443.18** annually, represents a critical gap in funding that, if left unaddressed, will only continue to grow. Without sufficient funding, the humane society may be forced to reduce services, which will exacerbate the problems of overpopulation and animal neglect.

Funding Gap: Annual Deficit

The following chart outlines the current costs associated with caring for both dogs and cats brought to the humane society, alongside the current annual municipal funding:

Category	Dogs	Cats	Total
Number of Animals per Year	133	470	
Average Daily Care Cost	\$8.97	\$6.76	
Average Length of Stay (Days)	47.8	47.8	
Daily Care Cost per Animal	$\$8.97 * 47.8 =$ \$428.76	$\$6.76 * 47.8 =$ \$323.13	
Total Care Cost per Year (Daily Care)	$\$428.76 * 133 =$ \$57,025.08	$\$323.13 * 470 =$ \$151,871.10	\$208,896.18
Spay/Neuter Cost Per Animal (average)	\$325	\$150	
Total Spay/Neuter per Animal (average)	$\$325 * 133 =$ \$43,225	$\$150 * 470 =$ \$70,500	\$113,725
Total Vaccination Cost	$\$70 * 133 =$ \$9,310	$\$50 * 470 =$ \$23,500	\$32,810
Total Annual Cost per Year	\$57,025.08 (Daily Care) + \$43,225 (Spay/Neuter) + \$9,310 (Vaccinations) = \$109,560.08	\$151,871.10 (Daily Care) + \$70,500 (Spay/Neuter) + \$23,500 (Vaccinations) = \$245,871.10	\$109,560.08 + \$245,871.10 = \$355,431.18
Current Municipal Funding			\$50,988
Total Annual Deficit			\$304,443.18

- Numbers derived from Year End 2023

Summary

- Annual Care Costs for Dogs: \$109,560.08
- Annual Care Costs for Cats: \$245,871.10
- Total Annual Care Costs (Dogs + Cats): \$355,431.18
- Municipal Funding: \$50,988
- Annual Deficit: \$304,443.18
- **Total Proposed Funding for 2025: \$355,431.18**

Conclusion and Recommendation

The current funding of **\$50,988** is insufficient to cover the annual costs of caring for the animals in our community. The total annual deficit of **\$304,443.18** must be addressed to ensure the humane society can continue to provide essential services such as shelter, spay/neuter, and vaccinations. Failure to increase funding will not only result in increased risks to public health and safety but will also lead to a further deterioration of the community's capacity to care for its animals.

We urge the City Council to recognize the critical role that the humane society and animal control play in protecting both animals and people in our municipality. We request the allocation of additional funds to ensure that our humane society can meet its obligations under provincial laws and continue to serve the community effectively.

Respectfully submitted,

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